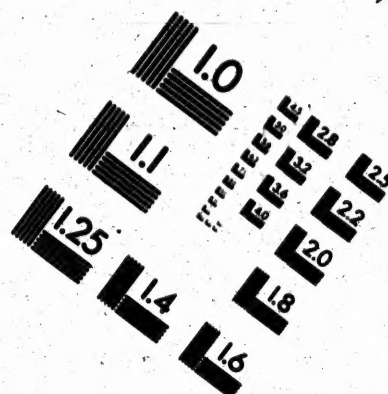
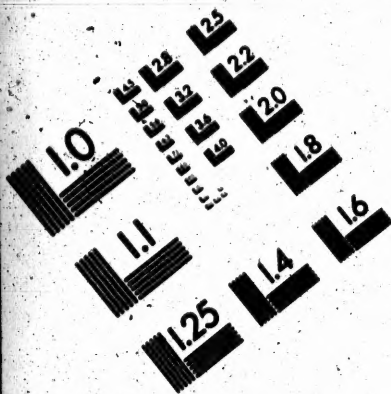




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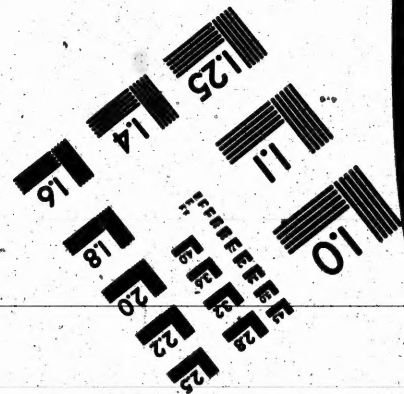
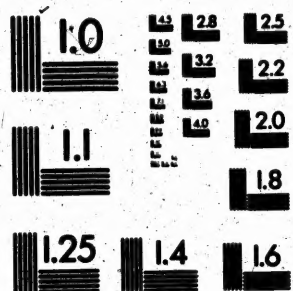
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Folly of Atheism,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE SEXTON, A. M., LL. D.; M. D.

*Honorary and Corresponding Fellow of the Royal Italian Society of Science;
Honorary Member of L'Accademia dei Quiriti, Rome;
Member of the Victoria Institute; Philosophical Society of Great Britain.*

AUTHOR OF

"The Baseless Fabric of Scientific Scepticism," "Theistic Problems,"
"Fallacies of Secularism," "Light in the Cloud,"
"Bible Cultures Dispelled," etc.

Νοῦν πάντα καὶ πράγματα διὰ πάντων ἰδύτα.

—PLATO

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THE FOLLY OF ATHEISM.

A Discourse Delivered before the American Institute
of Christian Philosophy.

7
" Quid potest esse tam apertum tamque perspicuum, cum
cælum suspeximus celestiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse
aliquod numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc regantur ?"

—*Cicero.*

" The Eternal Will is the Creator of the world, as He is the
creator of the finite reason."—*Fichte.*

" The Laws of Nature cannot account for their own origin."
—*John Stuart Mill.*

" The omnipresence of something which passes comprehen-
sion, is a belief which has nothing to fear from the most inex-
orable logic, but on the contrary is a belief which the most in-
exorable logic shews to be profoundly true."—*Herbert Spencer.*

" Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
Portentous sight ! the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the moon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
Cries out, Where is it ?"

—*Coleridge.*

The Folly of Atheism.



It will readily be understood that the title of this discourse has been suggested by and is based on a passage—well-known to everyone—in the Book of Psalms, wherein we read that “the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”

The word here rendered fool is נָבִיל *nāh bāhl'*, and is derived from a root signifying to *wither*. It has doubtless a reference to the withering of the soul that a denial of God involves. In Psalm i. 3 we read of the godly man, “his leaf also shall not wither,” where the same word is employed, signifying spiritual degeneracy, or the lowering of that part of man which raises him above the inferior creatures. The man who believes in God, and delights in His law, shall not only bring forth fruit in abundance in his actions, but his leaf also—the embellishment of his character—shall not wither or decline. When the Psalmist, therefore, would describe an Atheist, he speaks of him as one who is withered. His actions will be sterile, and his character barren. In all great and noble undertakings he will be unfruitful. And this has been the characteristic of Atheism in all ages of the world. It is cold, negative, cheerless, and gloomy, lacking enthusiasm, feeling, emotion and sympathy.

The Atheist often complains that David, in calling him a fool, was guilty of a lack of courtesy. But truth is higher than politeness. Strong language is often justifiable, and, as a rule, unbelievers are not slow to use it. They thunder and fulminate, pile up expletives in their language, and hurl abroad their anathemas like small Joves incensed with passion. Moreover

one of their own apostles—no less a personage than Thomas Paine—has nearly re-echoed David's words. He says, "It is the fool only and not the philosopher, or prudent man, who would live as if there were no God." David, however, does not use the term translated fool, in an offensive manner. His meaning is, that the man who says, There is no God, is foolish; his spiritual faculty is withered; his reasoning powers are at fault; his intellect is defective on its higher side—the side that opens up Godward. He is destitute of that true wisdom which belongs to religion, and which can find its full expression only in Divine worship. Shakespeare says:—

"God shall be my hope,
My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet."

The Christian man who echoes this sentiment cannot but feel that he who lacks this hope, this guide and light, to illumine his path, walks in the darkness without a guide, and destitute of any solid ground for hope. His refusal to be thus led and cheered is, to say the least of it, unwise.

Not alone, however, are the spiritual perceptions of the Atheist withered and deteriorated, but his reasoning powers must be terribly at fault; for at every point to which we turn the evidence of God's existence is overwhelming. This I shall now proceed to show.

The question of God's existence lies at the root of all religion, and is its foundation and support. If there be no God then it is clear that every system of Theology in the world must be false, and all worship idle and delusive. The large majority of the hopes and fears that have agitated men's minds from the dawn of humanity until now have been simply the mad dreams of millions of disordered brains, baseless as the visions of the night, and unsubstantial as the hallucinations of a maniac. Certain it is that if Atheism be the true philosophy, the whole world with a few exceptional instances, hardly worth naming, has been labouring under a huge delusion ever since the time when the earliest records give us the faintest knowledge of the

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sayings and doings of our race. And even to-day upon this supposition, the truth is not known to one man in a million—the rest are still in the darkness of old errors, and misled by the superstition of their fathers. To say the least of it, this is not a pleasant state of things to contemplate when we take into consideration the unparalleled consolation that religion has in all times brought to the suffering, the friendless and the distressed, the persecuted and the afflicted, the sick and the dying. Not easily will men give up their faith in God until something higher, nobler and better adapted to human needs and human wants be offered in its place. Show us that God is not, and the loss is incalculable. Then shall we feel what has been so graphically described by the great German—Richter—so well rendered into English by Thomas Carlyle. He remarks—it is Christ who is supposed to be speaking—"I went through the worlds, I mounted into the suns, and flew with the galaxies through the wastes of Heaven; but there is no God. I descended as far as being casts its shadow, and looked down into the abyss, and cried, 'Father, where art thou?' But I heard only the everlasting storm which no one guides, and the gleaming rainbow of creation hung without a sun that made it, over the abyss and trickled down. And when I looked up to the immeasurable world for the Divine *Eye*, it glared on me with an empty, black, bottomless *eye-socket*, and Eternity lay upon Chaos, eating it and ruminating it. Cry on, ye dissonances; cry away the shadows, for He is not. The pale grown shadows flitted away, as white vapour which frost has formed with the warm breath disappears, and all was void. And then came, fearful for the heart, the dead children who had been awakened in the churchyard into the temple, and cast themselves before the high form on the altar, and said, 'Jesus, have we no Father?' And he answered, with streaming tears, 'We are all orphans, I and you: we are without Father.'" Then came loud shrieking of dissonances, parting asunder of quivering temple walls, "grinding press of Worlds, the torch dance of celestial wild-fires," "glimmering souls upon the sea of Death," "void of immensity," "Dead, dumb, Nothingness," "Cold everlasting Necessity,"

"Frantic Chance!" The contemplation is a terrible one, that we may be poor helpless orphans tossed on the boisterous and uncertain sea of chance, with no compass to steer by, no pilot to guide, and no chart of the ocean on which we are drifting so recklessly and so mercilessly. Looking at the bare possibility of such a state of things we are led to cry out in the language of Wordsworth:

Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So that, standing on some pleasant lea,
I might have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.

But the question before us is whether this unlovely system be true or false. And my business is to prove it utterly false, neither conformable to science, reason or philosophy, and opposed to all sound thought.

Theism asserts that there is a God, and as far as I am concerned I do this in the most positive manner. I do not say I think there is a God, or I believe there is a God, but, there is a God, or in other words God exists. The Atheist says there is no God. And do not let me be told here that Atheists do not deny the existence of God, for I can show you if necessary that many of them have done so in the most dogmatic fashion.* The more moderate form of unbelief, however, is content to say that there may be a God, but that sufficient evidence of His existence is not to be had. This is in reality not Atheism, but Agnosticism. Nevertheless it will answer equally well for my purpose on this occasion. Theism is as I will show you capable of furnishing a rational theory of the Universe, harmonious and complete as a whole and therefore satisfactory from a philosophic standpoint, and we demand of Atheism that it shall do the same, and if it fail, as it most assuredly will, then we must pronounce it unphilosophic and false. You will find as a rule that the Atheist will take refuge behind a negation, saying that as he affirms nothing he cannot be expected to prove a negative, and hence by this means he seeks to avoid all argu-

*Vide Appendix A.

ment, save that of mere denial, which of course is a very easy process, whatever may be the truth that is set forth or affirmed. Mr. Holyoake, an authority on the Atheistic side—himself an Atheist—has well said of the mere Negationist, "His stock in trade is the simplest possible. He has only to deny what somebody else holds and he is set up in the art of controversy." This is very true. Denials are of course simple enough. Pulling down or destroying is very easy work. An idiot may spoil a painting in five minutes which it took a man of genius a life time to produce. But we cannot allow the Atheist to take this position. For he often affirms very much indeed and his affirmations require proof equally with those of the Theist. And besides in philosophy the human mind cannot rest in a mere negation. Thus, if Atheism be the true philosophy of the universe, it must prove itself to be so, by boldly facing all the facts of existence, and giving us such an explanation of them as it is able to furnish. Unless it can do this, it can never satisfy a thinking, enquiring mind. The position taken by a certain modern school, that we should rest content with the facts of nature, and make no attempt to draw inferences from them, is absurd, and the task which it enjoins impossible. No sane man can long be content to contract his thoughts within the narrow boundaries of the region of sense, and to rest in the confines of the visible. Facts are valueless, except as far as they shadow forth a philosophy relating to that which lies behind them, and the business of which is to explain them and to trace their causes. Any attempt to drive back the human mind from this inquiry must inevitably fail, as it has always failed in the history of the past. As Professor Huxley has well said, "The term positive, as implying a system of thought, which assumes nothing beyond the content of observed facts, implies that which never did exist, and never will."* And even Herbert Spencer, who cannot be accused of any predilections in favour of Theism, remarks: "Positive knowledge never can fill the whole region of thought. At the uttermost reach of discovery there must

*Lay Sermons p. 178.

ever arise the question, What lies beyond? The human mind, throughout all time, must occupy itself not only with ascertained phenomena and their relations, but also with that unascertained something which phenomena and their relations imply.* Any system, therefore, to be worth a straw, must deal with that which lies beyond the domain of fact, and must be prepared to hazard some sort of a theory as to the why and the wherefore of things. Herein it is that Atheism has always broken down.

Theology has usually been considered to occupy ground perfectly distinct from, and of altogether a different character from, that upon which Science finds her sure and certain footing. This notion is utterly incorrect. Theology is as much a science as geology or chemistry. The existence of God is as clear an induction from observed and recorded facts as the Copernican system of astronomy; the evidence upon which both are received being of precisely the same character. The Baconian principle of induction, which has furnished us with the true scientific method, consists in collecting all the facts that have any bearing on the subject, bringing these together, arranging and classifying them, so that they no longer stand out in disjointed isolation, but form one grand whole. This done, a law is inferred which shall cover the ground occupied by all facts, and with which each one shall be in harmony. In the words of an anonymous writer in a review: "Take astronomy as an example. In the heaven above us there are certain facts, or phenomena, which men could not fail to observe; as, for instance, the rising and setting of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the regular recurrence of the stars, at certain periods, along a fixed path or orbit. Merely to observe and record these facts was not enough for reasonable man. He was compelled by his very nature to reason—i. e., to theorise—upon them, to seek for some law under which they might be ranged, for some cause to which they might be traced. He could not but ask, 'From what does the regular order and recurrence of these phenomena spring?' And after other answers

*First Principles, pp. 16, 17.

to the question had been given and accepted for a time, he lit on that which satisfies him to this day, in the law of gravitation. This law is simply an inference, an hypothesis, a theory; but it accounts for the astronomical facts as no other theory does: and, in this, therefore, at least for the present, and till some wider generalisation be reached, the inquisitive reason of man rests and is satisfied. Thus, from a multitude of effects, scattered through the universe, man has argued up to a cause, or law, to which they may all be referred." This is the method pursued in all branches of science, and it is the one which we follow in theology. Science is nothing but our reading of natural facts—our theory of the phenomena of the universe. We arrive at the hypothesis by arguing up from effects to their causes, or down from a cause to its effects. Now, if it can be shown—as I feel confident it can—that the existence of God is reached by this process, we thereby bring theology into the field of science, and establish its primal truth upon the same footing as gravitation or any other so-called natural law. And the Atheist who would overturn our theory is bound, in the first place, to show that our induction does not square with the facts, and, in the second, to give us a non-Theistic hypothesis which does. Sir Isaac Newton—and hardly a greater authority could be quoted—has well said "The reasoning on to God lies properly within the domain of science. For it belongs to science starting from phenomena to stop not till it raise us to the hidden ground of these phenomena." And it is by this process—a strictly scientific one—that we reach the proofs of God's existence.

In dealing with this question, we must start from facts, for with facts all thought must begin, but not terminate. Lord Bacon has well observed that "those who have handled science have either been men of experiment or of theory. The men of experiment are like the ant—they only collect and use. The theorists are like the spiders who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course; it gathers its materials from the flowers of the garden and the field, but transforms and digests them by a power of its own. Not unlike

this is the true business of philosophy."* And it is this true principle of philosophy that must be followed in discussing the question before us. The material that we use in thought must be gathered from facts; but our decisions must rest with the legitimate inferences that are derived from these. All man's knowledge, according to Kant, begins with sensible experience; but all does not come from experience. Every fact has a meaning, sometimes lying very deep down in its nature; and this meaning has to be extracted if we would arrive at an accurate opinion. We must question the phenomena of the universe, in order to learn what they have to say of their causes, their relations, and their purposes. This may not always be an easy task, but it is a very essential one, if we would arrive at a correct conclusion. Sophocles remarks:—

"What's sought for may be found,
But truth unsearch'd for seldom comes to light."†

This is terribly applicable to many of the Atheists that I have known. Their minds appear to have been cast in such a mould that they can see nothing beyond the most palpable of material things. Hence facts have for them no meaning beyond that mere semblance which always appears on the outside.

I will now lay down a series of propositions to which I beg you to give me your attention.

I. I EXIST. I KNOW THAT I AM A CONSCIOUS PERSONAL BEING, OR WHAT PHILOSOPHERS CALL AN EGO.

In making this affirmation that I exist, I affirm of myself something that is simply amidst the complexity of my surroundings and the variety of my thoughts. This Ego may manifest itself in a thousand different ways, but underneath these manifestations there lies something that is substantial amidst the mere phenomenal variations. That which I call

*Novum Organum, Aph. 95.

† τὸ δέ ζητούμενον.

Ἄλλωτὸν ἐκφεύγει δέ τὰ μελούμενον.

—Sophocl. Œd. Tyr. 110.

myself is not a collection of sensation or a congeries of thoughts but a something to which both thoughts and sensations belong. It is a central point to which all the influences that affect me converge and from which all the affluences by which I affect other things diverge. When I use the pronoun "I" it is to mark myself in contradistinction, not only to all that surrounds me, but to all else that appertains to me. Whenever I affirm my consciousness I thereby affirm my existence as a separate personality. Sensation, perception, volition, action, are recognized by me, not as self, but as affections and exertions of self. I am not and cannot be an abstraction, but a substantial existence, and my knowledge of this existence is higher than any I can possibly obtain of my surroundings or of anything which is exterior to me. Then I see around me other personages whom I infer to be like myself, conscious thinking beings. I do not and cannot see their consciousness, but only the manifestation of such consciousness which is fact enough. Prof. Maurice has well said "The student of history finds himself amidst a world of I's." All my knowledge must be tested by my consciousness. The external world can only be proved to exist by appealing to this consciousness. The senses are simply the inlets to this and of themselves have no separate or independent means of deciding anything. Here it is that the materialistic philosophy so thoroughly breaks down, for it elevates matter above that by which alone material existences can be known.

II. IT IS A NECESSARY TRUTH FROM WHICH THERE IS NO ESCAPE THAT SOMETHING IS ETERNAL.

Something must have existed from all Eternity. This truth is axiomatic. It is a necessity of thought and, consequently, needs no proof, and is susceptible of none, because it is a necessity of thought. Something must have existed from all Eternity, or there had still been nought; for *ex nihilo nihil fit*. "This," says Dr. Samuel Clark, "is so evident and undeniable a proposition that no Atheist in any age has ever presumed to assert the contrary; and therefore there is little need of being particular in the proof of it. For, since something now is, 'tis

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evident that something always was. Otherwise, the things that now are must have been produced out of nothing, absolutely and without cause—which is a plain contradiction in terms. For to say a thing is produced, and yet that there is no cause at all of that production, is to say that something is effected when it is effected by nothing—that is at the same time when it is not effected at all. Whatever exists has a cause, a reason, a ground of its existence—a foundation on which its existence relies, a ground or reason why it doth exist rather than not exist—either in the necessity of its own nature (and then it must have been of itself eternal) or in the will of some other being (and then that other being must, at least, in the order of nature and causality, have existed before it). That something, therefore, has really existed from all eternity, is one of the certainest and most evident truths in the world, acknowledged by all men and disputed by none. Yet as to the manner how it can be, there is nothing in nature more difficult for the mind of man to conceive than this very first plain and self-evident truth. For how anything can have existed eternally, that is, how an eternal duration can be now actually past, is a thing utterly as impossible for our narrow understandings to comprehend as anything that is not an express contradiction can be imagined to be. And yet to deny the truth of the proposition, that an eternal duration is now actually past, would be to assert something far more unintelligible, even an express and real contradiction.* Something, therefore, must have been eternal. That eternal something, whatever may be its nature, is infinite, at least in duration. This is, I take it, a point upon which the Atheist and the Theist are both agreed. Nor can that which is infinite in duration be limited in extent, for that supposition would imply an infinite existence with a finite attribute, or a finite existence with an infinite attribute; or some sort of existence combining in itself infinite and finite attributes, either of which is a contradiction of terms, because it implies a finite infinity, which is as irrational as a square circle or a crooked straight line. The point, therefore, where a divergence takes place between the Atheist and

*Being and Attributes of God, 9th Ed., pp. 8, 9.

the Theist is as to the nature of the one Infinite Existence.

III. THE ETERNAL AND INFINITE EXISTENCE IS NOT MAN.

This is so self-evident that no time need be taken up in proving it. Each individual man knows that he has not existed from Eternity. Neither has the race to which he belongs. For in the first place such a supposition is philosophically absurd as it implies an infinite chain made up of finite links. And secondly, science has demonstrated that there was a time on the planet when man was not. If it be said that man was evolved from a lower animal, I reply there was a time when no living organism existed. Man was therefore produced, that is, caused in time. Somewhat or some one must have preceded him, and brought him into being. And this cause, whatever may be its nature or by whatever name it may be called, must have been adequate to the production of the effect which we call man. It must not only have been capable of moulding his bodily organs with marvellous precision and skill, adapting one to the other, and the whole to the world in which he lives, but it must have given him life, a task which could only be accomplished by that which was itself alive as modern science fully attests. This cause must therefore have been a living power, for that which does not live cannot impart life. Moreover as man is intelligent, this cause must have been capable of imparting intelligence and therefore itself intelligent, for intelligence to originate in non-intelligence is really for something to spring from nothing, which is absurd. And then that substratum in man which constitutes him an Ego, which underlies all the phenomena of his external nature, could originate only in that which is not phenomenal but has an existence as an Eternal Reality. A modern writer has well said "As imperatively as I myself and all other phenomena of the visible world, with our limitations of place and time, demand the recognition of realities underlying and producing them, which realities constitute an invisible world beyond the limits of place and time, so imperatively does the limited conditions, yet regulated play of these realities demand the recognition of a transcendent Reality, an *Ens Realissimum*, unlimited, unconditioned, by whom

they must be adjusted and actuated, from whom they must come and in whom they must perpetually have their being."* In the fact that I am, is involved that of an intelligent and conscious Reality, capable of producing me and others like me in the race to which I belong.

IV. THE ETERNAL AND ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS NOT THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE.

This proposition is of course the one to which the Atheist will take exception. But it can nevertheless be supported by arguments which are quite unanswerable. We have seen that there is somewhere an Eternal Reality, and it is not difficult to show that such a Reality cannot be found in any part of material nature or in the physical universe as a whole.

1. *The material universe is conditioned and limited and cannot therefore either in its parts or as a whole constitute the Absolute and Unconditioned One.*

Everything that we recognise in the external world and in man is conditional and limited. All the facts of nature with which we are familiar—indeed, all those of which we are capable of conceiving in matter—are interdependent, limited by and limiting each other. They constitute, in fact, what we call phenomena—a word which of itself, as every Greek scholar knows, means an appearance, and sustaining a relation to that which is substantial and underlying. A phenomenon cannot stand by itself. It has no meaning except in relation to a substantive, which is its subject and support. Says Ritter, a celebrated German thinker: "No phenomena could present themselves before us unless there existed something as their ground—something of which we can predicate these to be the phenomena. The very notion, therefore, of 'appearances' requires for its completion the 'correlative' notion of 'grounds' for these appearances, of which grounds these appearances are the predicates."† Whenever, therefore, we think of phenomena we are compelled by a stern necessity of the laws of thought to think of something upon which these phenomena depend, and

*Griffith.

†Unsterblichkeit.

to which they owe their origin. Limitation is an essential characteristic of matter in all its forms. You cannot conceive, if you try, of unlimited matter. Now, that which is limited, in the very nature of things, can neither be Infinite nor Absolute. Yet there must be an Absolute, since without the Unconditioned, nothing that is conditioned could exist; and there must be an Infinite, for it is one of the necessities of thought. You cannot even think it out of existence. The Atheist, then, is bound to tell us where and what is the Infinite and Absolute existence. He must either show some form of matter that is unconditioned and unlimited, which is, in fact, a contradiction in terms; or prove that there is no Absolute existence, which is, in truth, to deny all existence; or he must admit that the Infinite is something transcending all material things, which is to relinquish his Atheism.

2. *All the phenomena of the material universe, consist of a series of changes, which are also Relative, Limited Subordinate and Secondary.*

This being so, to what conclusion are we irresistibly driven by what Herbert Spencer calls "the momentum of thought," which leads us from the things as they appear to the why and how of their existence? The inference is as clear as that two and two make four, that there must be a Prime Mover from whom all these secondary movements spring. A consideration of this fact it was that let Aristotle to ascend from all observable movements and principles of motion up to what he calls the "principle of principles," the first "immoveable mover," which "causes all things else to move." All movements that we see are conditioned by other movements. No single material thing with which we are acquainted can move itself, or stop itself when set in motion. There is no property of matter better known or more thoroughly established than that of *Inertia*,* or, as it is now called, *Mobility*. How, then, is motion caused? I do not mean secondary motion, but primary motion. Whence do all these subordinate movements have their origin? There is no primary movement in any material

*Vide Appendix B.

thing with which we are acquainted. Motion connected with phenomena cannot be eternal, for the phenomena themselves are transient and dependent. Professor Huxley has well said: "The very nature of the phenomena demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end."* Every change that is observed in a body is caused by something exterior to itself.

3. *Each part of the material universe shews itself to have been an effect, and must therefore owe its existence to a cause outside of itself.*

The Atheist cannot point to a single object in physical nature which does not bear upon it the marks of having been caused by some power exterior to itself. Suns and stars, and trees and flowers, and rolling waters, the violent tornado and the soft, gentle zephyr, the thunderstorm and the dew-drop, the pebble stone on the sea beach and the mightiest range of mountains on the earth, the colossal mammoth and the tiny animalcule that disports itself in a drop of water, all cry out, "Not in me will you find the cause of existence." No; material nature is simply a series of effects—nothing more. Even man himself, the highest of all created things, feels that he owes his existence to *somewhat* or to *some one* higher than himself. It has been well said by one: "We are not sufficient of ourselves—not self-originated, nor self-sustained. A few years ago and we were not; a few years hence and our bodies shall not be. A mystery is gathered about our little life. We have but small control over things around us; we are limited and hemmed in on all sides. Our schemes fail, our plans miscarry. One after another our lights go out. Our realities prove dreams. Our hopes waste away. We are not where we would be, nor what we would be. We find that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We find our circumference very near the centre, everywhere. And we feel an irresistible tendency to refer all things, ourselves with them, to a power beyond us, sublime and mysterious, which we cannot measure, nor even comprehend." Where, then, is the cause of all things, ourselves included? It cannot be found in

*Lay Sermons p. 17.

material nature, for no part of the universe could cause itself, much less something besides itself. Every individual thing that we see, declares itself to be an effect. Where, then, and what, is the cause? This is the question which no Atheist can answer—the problem before which Materialistic science bows its head abashed. Atheism and its twin sister Agnosticism hang up a curtain here, and exclaim, "We don't know what is inside;" while in truth our own consciousness extends both within and without. Mr. John Stuart Mill,* while admitting that the material universe is continually changing in all its parts, and that whatever changes must be an effect, yet thinks that there is a permanent element in Nature, which does not change, and may be therefore the cause. But what is this permanent element? You will perhaps be surprised to hear that it is Force. How this statement can help the Atheist out of the difficulty of his position, one fails to see. For Force is not matter, nor an attribute of matter—nor, in fact, of matter in any sense of the word, as I will presently shew. The permanency of Force, therefore, but proves the permanency of mind, and that in mind, and mind alone, can an efficient cause of material things be found. All matter is an effect, whose cause must be other than material; and this cause is God.

Atheists are constantly babbling of Nature, as though by use of a word—which they often employ in a very loose and vague sense—they got rid of all difficulty in connection with this question. What is meant by Nature? Unless we have a clear and definite meaning in our minds that we attach to this word, its use is not likely to help us much. The term Nature, it seems to me, is very often used in a most ambiguous sense, even by scientific men. At one time it is employed to denote the totality of all existence; at another, to describe the causes or conditions of things; at another, the relations of phenomena; and sometimes all these collectively. Such use of language is likely to land us in inextricable confusion. According to the derivation of the word Nature (*Natura*—*Nascitur*), it means that which is born or produced—in point of fact, the becoming.

**Vid.* Essay on Theism.

In this sense, therefore, it had a beginning and will have an end. It is solely phenomenal, and consequently its cause must be sought for outside of itself. That what becomes or begins to be, cannot be the cause of itself, but must be a consequence of antecedent conditions. Nature therefore, as the sum-total of phenomena, is an effect, and as such requires a cause. And here again we are driven to something beyond Nature. There can be no phenomena—and Nature consists simply of phenomena—without change, no change without motion, no motion without force, and no force without mind as will be seen hereafter. Thus we are led by various lines of thought to the same conclusion. "None of the processes of Nature," says one of the most eminent scientific men of this age, "since the time when Nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. We are, therefore, unable to ascribe either the existence of the molecules or the identity of their properties to the operation of any of the causes which we call natural. On the other hand, the exact quality of each molecule to all others of the same kind gives it, as Sir John Herschel has well said, the essential character of a manufactured article, and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent. Thus we have been led, along a strictly scientific path, very far from the point at which science must stop. Not that Science is arrested from studying the external mechanism of a molecule which she cannot take to pieces, any more than from investigating an organism which she cannot put together. But, in tracing back the ultimate matter, Science is arrested when she assures herself, on the one hand, that the molecule has been made, and on the other, that it has not been made by any of the processes we call natural.* Thus Nature is an effect, a phenomenon, a manufactured article; in other words, a creation. And her Cause and Creator is God.

V. THERE MUST BE A FIRST CAUSE, AN UNCAUSED CAUSE.

The idea of causation—and it is a mental impossibility to escape from it—if followed out must lead inevitably to God.

*Professor Clerk Maxwell: President's Address, British Association, 1870.

not trace accurately the nexus between cause and effect without ending in a first cause, that is an uncaused cause, a cause which was not an effect. This in truth is the idea that is necessarily involved in causation and any other view would involve the denial of causation altogether. It has been sometimes suggested that there might be an infinite series of causes and effects. But that is absurd, for it supposes an infinite chain made up of finite links which is an impossibility. And such a series of causes and effects is utterly inconceivable, because, in that case, there would be no true cause at all. Wollaston adopted an illustration, which puts this in a very clear light. Suppose an infinite number of links in a chain suspended from the sky. The question immediately occurs—By what power is this chain held up? And to say that each link supports the other will not satisfy the requirements of the mind, because we shall want to know what supports the whole chain. This demand flows naturally from the laws of thought, and the question that it asks must be answered. The true idea of a cause, as it shapes itself in the human mind is, as Dr. Clarke has ably shown: First, that it causes something else; and, second, that it is itself uncaused. In a series of causes and effects, any one may be a provisional cause; but not a real one. In following out this process of thought, we must necessarily, in the end, reach an uncaused cause, and this must be capable of producing the various effects which we observe. Now, we all know this must be discovered in a self-existent Being or nowhere. Even Herbert Spencer, the Corypheus of modern sceptical philosophy, admits that the doctrine of causation leads to a first cause. In his "First Principles" he remarks: "We cannot think at all about the impressions which the external world produces on us without thinking of them as caused; and we cannot carry out an inquiry concerning their causation without inevitably committing ourselves to the hypothesis of a first cause."*

VI. THE FORCE BEHIND NATURE ORIGINATES IN MIND.

Motion is now held to be caused by force, and all the manifestations of force in the material universe are resolvable into

*Light in the Cloud, by the same author, pp. 12, 13.

Handwritten text, possibly a list or notes, with some illegible characters and a circled area. The text is written in a cursive or semi-cursive style. A circled area contains several characters that appear to be "11" or "111".

Small handwritten mark or character, possibly a dot or a small letter.

Small handwritten mark or character, possibly a dot or a small letter.

each other. Light, heat, electricity, magnetism, etc.—which were at one time supposed to be entities, and called imponderable bodies, from the fact that they were not subject to gravitation, and could not, therefore, be weighed—are now recognised as modes of motion, that is, forms of force. There are no such things as light and heat. There is no electric fluid, although men still talk about it and write about it as though it had an actual existence. All these phenomena consist of forms of force and can be converted each one into the other. But what then we ask is the thing called force? Motion is a condition of matter, we are told. Yes, but how did it become conditioned and what conditioned it? Force and motion are perfectly distinct. Take an illustration which I have given elsewhere.* A ball lying on the ground is set in motion. Now what has happened? Motion has been imparted to that which was before at rest. It is the same ball in an altered condition. Nothing has been added by the movement and nothing taken away. The motion simply implies that the ball has changed its place. But something must have operated to cause the motion, or the rest had never been interrupted. That something we call force. Force then is known to us as the ability to produce certain changes in matter. It is the name given to that which originates motion, or changes the state of a body with regard to motion.

It can hardly be necessary for me here to enlarge upon the doctrine of the Unity of Force and the Conservation of Energy which modern science has brought so conspicuously to the front, since no one who knows anything of science will have the temerity to dispute it. Each mode of action can be converted into the other, heat into light, electricity into magnetism, and all into momentum. This is not theory, but demonstrable fact. In order to make the matter more clear, however, I may give a simple illustration as detailed in the Lecture Notes of Dr. Meyer. He says: "The heat developed by the 'falling force' of a weight striking the terminals of a compound thermal battery (formed by pieces of iron and German silver wire twisted together at alternate ends) caused a current of electricity through the wire,

*Baseless Fabric of Scientific Scepticism, p. 122.

which, being conducted through a helix, magnetised a needle (which then attracted iron particles) caused light to appear in a portion of the circuit formed of Wollaston's fine wire, decomposed iodide of potassium, and finally moved the needles of a galvanometer." Here then, we have kinetic energy converted into heat; then absorbed heat transformed into electricity; that again converted into magnetism, light and chemical force; and so on. All the forms of energy or modes of motion are thus reducible to unity—in fact, to one force. "Electricity and magnetism, heat and light, muscular energy and chemical action, motion and mechanical work, are only different forms of one and the same power. * * Moreover, chemical union of the elements of matter, the attraction of gravitation in all the bodies of the universe, are but varied forms of this universal motive force." (*Dr. Cohn*). Now, the question that arises is, what is the origin of this one Force? From what source does it spring? There is but one answer. It owes its origin to mind. In human experience force invariably springs from volition. The intermediate agents between the will and the last thing observed to move may be numerous; but this in no case alters the fact that, tracing the links of the chain upwards to its origin, we come in the end upon volition. Dr. Carpenter—who certainly had no bias in favour of Christianity—remarks: "Force must be regarded as the direct expression of that mental state which we call Will. All force is of one type, and that type is mind."* And the same view is advanced by Herschell, Wallace, Laycock, Murphy, and many other of the leaders of scientific thought. Even Herbert Spencer—who is usually claimed by Atheists or Agnostics as belonging to their school—is compelled to concede almost all that I am here contending for. He says: "The force by which we ourselves produce changes, and which serves to symbolise the cause of changes in general, is the final disclosure of analysis."† Force, therefore, is of mind, not of matter. It is an expression of Will, and an attribute of spirit.‡ We are driven, consequently, by the irre-

*Human Physiology, p. 542.

†First Principles, p. 235.

‡Vide Appendix C.

sistible force of logic, to the conclusion—the only rational one—that the mind, which is the cause of all motion in the varied phenomena of the physical universe, is the ever present God. Motion cannot, *per se*, produce motion. It is a fundamental axiom in physics that motion cannot be generated by motion itself, but only by force. Inertness and energy, activity and passivity are contradictory attributes, and cannot, therefore, be affirmed of the same thing. Any one who says that matter is inert, and yet at the same time maintains that it can exert force, uses words without meaning, and, consequently, talks nonsense. Herbert Spencer remarks: "Force is the ultimate of ultimates. Matter and motion are differently conditioned manifestations of Force. And Force can be regarded only as a certain conditioned effect of the Unconditioned Cause—as the active reality indicating to us an Absolute Reality by which it is immediately produced."* Force, therefore, cannot be attribute of matter, for it moulds and fashions matter. It is higher than any material existence. The entire physical universe is under the control of Force, and, but for it, must sink into a state of torpor, inactivity, stagnation, and death, or, possibly, even cease to be. Force, therefore, not being in matter, must be sought for in mind and in mind alone. Spirit force is the only force possible in the universe. In all our experience we know of but one originator of force, which is volition. A hundred illustrations might be given did time permit. The doctrine that mind is the originator of motion is as old as the hills. *Noûs μὲν ἀρχὴν κινήσεως*, says Anaxagoras. And all modern science is tending marvellously in the direction of this truth. Motion transformed in multifarious ways, and transmitted through a thousand media, always commences in mind or spirit. Dr. Carpenter observes: "The deep-seated instincts of humanity, and the profoundest researches of philosophy, alike point to mind as the one and only source of power."† And a far greater man—Sir John Herschell—remarks: "The conception of Force as the originator of motion in matter without bodily contact, or

*First Principles, pp. 235-6.

†Nature VI., p. 312.

the intervention of any inter medium, is essential to the right interpretation of physical phenomena, • • its exertion makes itself manifest to our personal consciousness by the peculiar sensation of effort, • • and it [force] affords a point of contact, a connecting link between the two great departments of being, mind and matter—the one as its originator, and the other as its recipient.”* All the various forms of energy which we see manifested around us in the ten thousand phenomena of nature are simply so many transformations of one force, springing from the one source of power, the Divine Will.

“For how should nature occupy a charge,
Dull, as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impelled
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
Sustains and is the life of all that lives.”

VII. THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE MANIFESTS THOUGHT AND THEREFORE MUST BE THE WORK OF A THINKER.

Now mark, that which is not the result of thought cannot be translated into thought. Take a book in your hand, open it, and you see at once the orderly arrangement of letters into words, and of words, into sentences. This bespeaks a certain amount of thought on the part of the author, and on the part of the compositor who set up the type. By no stretch of imagination can you conceive this arrangement to be the result of chance or accident. The types might have been thrown down at random ten million times, and they never would have fallen into the order in which they were placed in the printer's form which was laid on the machine when a single sheet of the volume was worked off. The book in question may not be a treatise on a very important topic, and the author may have dealt with his subject very imperfectly; but still it is impossible to imagine that the arrangement can be other than the result of mind. A volume of Shakespeare, of Newton, or of Kant, will differ greatly from an elementary school book, or

*Familiar Lectures of Science, p. 467.

from the immature production of an ignorant and uninformed man; but the difference will, after all, be one of degree only; in both cases thought must have been at work to produce a book at all. Chance is incompetent to form a single sentence, to say nothing of writing several hundred pages. And the amount of thought contained in the volume will be the measure of what can be extracted from it. In other words, you cannot get more thought out of a thing than has been put into it. You may get out less, because your mind may be incompetent to grasp all the meaning of the author; and in that case you may misunderstand him through failing to reach his profundity. But whether his thoughts be deep or shallow, there will be no question in your mind, when you see his book, that the presence of the thinker has been there. Now, if thought can be extracted from the material universe—in other words, if order and harmony can be detected—it is as certain that mind has been at work as that the book before referred to was produced by an intelligent being. And that such order does prevail, I take it, no one will deny. For what is all our science but a reading of nature, with a view to discover the meaning of her forces and her laws? All investigation and all experiment is but an attempt to fathom the meaning of the mysterious language that has been so deeply engraven on her multifarious pages. Again and again has Nature been most aptly compared to a book, and a marvellous volume it is, in which we may read—

“The perfect hand
That poised, impels, and rules the whole.”

Let me give you a very simple illustration. There is a painting, say, of a great master. So perfect a work of art is it that men come long distances to see it, and all who gaze upon it are charmed and delighted; and leave impressed with the marvellous skill of the painter. It is a landscape, and the trees and flowers are so natural that they look as though you could break off a twig or a leaf and carry it away, whilst the cattle browsing in the foreground seem as though they could really walk out of the frame. “What a wonderful genius,” you

exclaim, "the man had who painted that picture." But you did not see any one paint the picture! Well, what of that, there is the work. But perhaps you never saw a picture being painted. No matter I see that now it is finished and I know it was done by a master mind, and could have come in no other way. Well, you are right. But remember that the picture is a landscape and therefore a copy. Yonder is the original, from which the picture was taken. No, you say it required mind to produce the copy, whilst the original came without any mind at all. Is that rationalism? Well, then, rationalism is the most irrational system the world ever heard of. But we have not done with the picture yet. After all the amount of thought put into it is limited. Suppose you should place a magnifying glass of high power on about a square inch of the background of the painting what would you see? Why, nothing but a daub, for you would fail to take in the design of the painter, and for the rest the paint would be destitute of order or harmony. But place under the microscope any portion however small of the original and you would increase the beauty, for God has stamped his impress on the most minute part as well as on the *tout ensemble* of the whole. Everywhere in the universe we see order and harmony and where these exist there is plan, and where there is plan there is purpose, and where there is purpose there is thought, and where there is thought there is a thinker.

And right here the Atheist steps in with his talk about Natural Law, as though that explained the whole thing. But what is law? It is but a word often used in a most loose and ambiguous sense. The expression "laws of nature," hangs most glibly on the lips of those who hardly know the meaning of the words. Such people speak of laws as though they were powers, forces, or even entities; whereas they are nothing more than observed orders of sequence. A law of nature is not an entity, neither is it a power; it can do nothing whatever. It is simply the mode of action of a force that lies behind it—that is all, and hence must not be referred to as though it were

capable of producing results. As a modern poet has said, addressing Deity—

"The laws of Nature are but Thine,
For Nature ! who is she ?
A name—the name that men assign
To Thy sole alchemy !"

The more wonderful the workings of Natural Law, the more astounding becomes the Power which lies behind the law, by whose volition the law itself was called into being. As has been well and wisely said, "All things—plants, animals, men ; sun, moon, and stars ; even storms, comets, meteors, with whatever seems most erratic—fulfill the law of their being. This law they did not impose on themselves, for they cannot repeal it, though they often rebel against it : it is imposed on them by a superior power, a power which rewards obedience and avenges disobedience. Man, for instance, is obviously under a law of health, against which he often sins, but which he cannot annul, however painful may be the results of his disobedience to that law. And so throughout the natural world we find a law independent of the will of the creatures, superior to them, supreme over them, capable, as we say, of asserting and avenging itself. Whence does this law come ? and who administers it ? For, of course, no law can really administer or assert itself. There must be some one behind and above the law. Law is only our name for a sequence, for a method of action, for a right or an invariable method. It implies the existence of a power, or person, whose method it is, whose will it expresses. The laws of nature can no more administer themselves than the laws of the land. Just as the laws of the land imply the existence of an authority, a magistrate, who will act on them and assert them, so the laws of nature bear witness to an unseen force, or power, or person, who imposes and enforces them, rewarding those who obey, punishing those who violate them. This power we call God." Let such men as Matthew Arnold term it a "stream of tendency, by which all things fulfil the law of their being," and thus lose themselves in the fogs that their own

language has called into existence; we prefer to keep in the bright sunlight of clear ideas, and to call it God. A stream, whether of tendency or of anything else, must have its origin somewhere. We know of no "stream" which does not flow from a source. And the only source of natural law is the Divine Law-maker, who is at once the originator and the administrator of the law.

The distinguishing characteristic of the physical universe is that the laws by which it is governed are mathematical relations. Gravitation is a numerical law, and under its influence the curves described by the heavenly bodies are the ellipse, circle, parabola, and hyperbola—that is, they all belong to the class of curves called conic sections, the properties of which occupied the great mind of Plato thousands of years before Newton demonstrated that whatever was true of them might be transferred to the heavenly bodies. Many of the geometer's *a priori* laws were first suggested by natural forms; and others, as Euclid's division in extreme and mean ratio, were afterwards discovered to be embodied in the universe. I have not time here, nor is it necessary, to explain these laws. They are known to every mathematician. Suffice it to say that natural symmetry leads us to investigate, first, the mathematical law which it embodies, and then the mechanical law which embodies it. Thus all the benefits that the race has derived from the pursuit and discovery of physical science have come to us through the suggestions of geometrical thoughts in the universe. "Now, all regularity of form," says a modern writer, "is as truly an expression of thought as a geometrical diagram can be. The particles of matter take their form in obedience to a force which is acting according to an intellectual law, imposing conditions on its exercise. It does not alter the reality of this ultimate dependence of symmetry upon thought, simply to introduce a chain of secondary causes, between the original thinking and the final expression of the thought." A geometrical figure, whether drawn by a piece of chalk upon a black board, or engraved on a block of wood and printed in a book, or making itself apparent in natural phenomena, presents in the one case

as in the other incontrovertible evidence that a geometer has by this means expressed a geometrical thought.

All natural forms conform more or less closely to geometrical ideals. This is the case alike in planets and crystals, in animals and plants. Nature, therefore, may be looked upon as made up of a series of drawings and models by which the science of mathematics may be taught in the school of life. The inference is irresistible that an intelligent mind has been at work on the grandest and most magnificent scale conceivable. Professor Flint well remarks: "Could mere matter know the abstrusest properties of space and time and number, so as to obey them in the wondrous way it does? Could what has taken so much mathematical knowledge and research to apprehend have originated with what was wholly ignorant of all quantitative relations? Or must not the order of the universe be due to a mind whose thoughts as to these relations are high above even those of the profoundest mathematicians, as are the heavens above the earth? If the universe were created by an intelligence conversant with quantitative truth, it is easy to understand why it should be ruled by definitely quantitative laws; but that there should be such laws in a universe which did not originate in intelligence is not only inexplicable but inconceivably improbable. There is not merely in that case no discoverable reason why there should be any numerically definite law in nature, but the probability of there being no law or numerical regularity of any kind is exceedingly great, and of there being no law-governed universe incalculably great. Apart from the supposition of a Supreme intelligence, the chances in favour of disorder against order, of chaos against cosmos, of the numerically indefinite and inconstant against the definite and constant, must be pronounced all but infinite. The belief in a Divine Reason is alone capable of rendering rational the fact that mathematical truths are realized in the material world."*

Did time permit, we might go through the various branches of natural knowledge, and show that whatever part of the universe we gaze upon, we must everywhere confront order and

*Theism, 136-7.

harmony. Even Mr. Darwin—whose theory of Natural Selection is looked upon by many as a short and easy method for pushing God out of His own universe—is compelled to use language that implies purpose and plan in Nature. "Contrivance" is a term that occurs scores of times in his writings. But assuredly there can be no contrivance without a contriver. This is a fact that the most superficial thinker cannot fail to see. Then, in his volume on "The Fertilisation of Orchids," he says: "The *Labellum* is developed into a long nectary, *in order* to attract *Lepidoptera*; and we shall presently give reasons for suspecting that the nectar is *purposely* so lodged that it can be sucked out slowly, *in order* to give time for the curious chemical quality of the viscid matter setting hard and dry."^{*} What is this but plan and purpose on the part of some Designing mind? Of one particular structure he says: "This *contrivance* of the guiding ridges may be compared to the little instrument sometimes used for guiding a thread into the eye of a needle." Assuredly this contrivance implies a contriver. The notion that every organ has a purpose or use he admits to have been most valuable to him in his studies, and to have enabled him to succeed in his discoveries. "The strange position of the *Labellum*," he remarks, "perched on the summit of the column ought to have shown me that here was the place for experiment. I ought to have scorned the notion that the *Labellum* was thus placed *for no good purpose*. I neglected this plain guide, and for a long time completely failed to understand the flower."[†] What is all this, but an admission, however reluctantly given, that a directing mind lies behind natural phenomena? Let any one try to explain this language upon any other principle. Can we wonder, then, that John Stuart Mill, with all his Scepticism, should be compelled to admit that "the adaptations of Nature affords a large balance of probability in favor of creation by intelligence."[‡] Well, a large balance of probability is, at least, something in our favour, if nothing more could be said.

^{*}Fertilisation of Orchids, p. 29.

[†]Ibid, p. 262.

[‡]Essay on Theism, p. 174.

In a world where so much uncertainty prevails "a large balance of probability" should be a tolerably conclusive guide. But we maintain that we have much more than "a large balance of probability" on our side. Lord Kelvin—scientifically a far greater man than Mr. Mill, and, therefore, a much better judge of this question—remarks: "Overpowering proof of intelligence and benevolent design lies around us; and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysical or scientific, turn us away from them for a time, they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing to us through nature the influence of a free will, and teaching us that all living beings depend upon the ever-acting Creator and Ruler."* This has been my own experience, and it has been that of other men whose minds for a time have been beclouded by doubts, but who by and by have found their way into the full sunlight of Christ's truth.

Ten thousand instances could be given, selected from every branch of knowledge, of the purpose and plan that pervades the universe; but my object is not so much to quote large numbers of facts as to reason upon a few that no one ever attempts to dispute. Now, if the existence of a Designing mind be got rid of from the universe, we are driven to the absurdity of supposing that all the order and harmony that exists in nature is the result of accident, or, as it has been fitly termed, the fortuitous concurrence of atoms. I am well aware that Atheistic philosophers object strongly to the word chance. Yet how are we to get rid of it if there be no purpose—no plan? The cause of the present state of things must resolve itself into chance, after all, call it by what name you will. Everything that does not occur by design must be the result of accident. There is no other alternative. Not that it is to be wondered at that the very ugly and very unphilosophical word chance, should be the objected to; but then theory with which it is indissolubly associated should also be renounced. If the arrangement that we see in the universe be not the result of plan on the part of some mind, it must have come by chance, and in no other way. Things might just as well have settled into some other shape as

* Address to the British Association, 1871.

that in which we now find them. And the chances were greatly in favor of their doing so. The probability must have been so great against the present arrangement as to render it next to impossible. For the order that we see repeats itself continually and regularly, which events resulting from chance never do. On the contrary, when an accident turns up once, the fact itself is a reason for us not to expect it again for a long time. Whenever a particular result occurs frequently, we always conclude that mind must have had something to do with the arrangement. Let three dice be thrown up into the air at haphazard, and it is quite possible, but highly improbable, that they should all fall with the six spots uppermost. But suppose the experiment repeated a hundred times, and always with the same result, there is no man outside a Lunatic Asylum who would not at once conclude that the dice were loaded. The case is precisely similar to that we see in Nature, only that the latter is a thousand times the stronger of the two. Kepler relates that one day, when he had long been meditating upon atoms and the laws by which they were governed, he was called to dinner. There was a salad on the table, and he said to his wife, who had prepared it: "Dost thou think that if from the creation plates of tin, leaves of lettuce, grains of salt, drops of oil and vinegar, and fragments of hard-boiled eggs, were floating in space, in all directions and without order, chance could assemble them today to form a salad?" His spouse replied, perhaps without seeing the joke, but yet very much to the purpose: "Certainly not so good a one, nor so well seasoned as this."* Now take the case of the motions of the heavenly bodies; and it is but one instance of thousands that might be given. The late Professor de Morgan demonstrated that, when only eleven planets were known, the odds against chance—to which in such a case intelligence is the only alternative—being the cause of all these bodies moving in one direction round the sun, with an considerable inclination of the planes of their orbits, were twenty thousand millions to one. "What prospect," are his own words,

* Claude Bertrand, *Les Fondateurs de l'Astronomie Moderne*, page 154.

" would there have been of such a concurrence of circumstances if a state of chance had been the only antecedent ? With regard to the sameness of the directions, either of which might have been from west to east, or from east to west, the case is precisely similar to the following : There is a lottery containing black and white balls, from each drawing of which it is as likely a black ball shall arise as a white one : what is the chance of drawing eleven balls all white ?—answer, 2,047 to 1 against it. With regard to the other question, our position is this : There is a lottery containing an infinite number of counters, marked with all possible different angles less than a right angle, in such a manner that any angle is as likely to be drawn as another, so that in ten drawings the sum of the angles drawn may be anything under ten right angles ; now, what is the chance of ten drawings giving collectively less than one right angle ?—answer, 10,000,000 to 1 against it. Now, what is the chance of both these events coming together ?—answer, more than 20,000,000,000 to one against it. It is consequently of the same degree of probability that there has been something at work which is not chance in the formation of the solar system.* That such results can have been brought about by chance is beyond belief.

'Tis true Atheists deny that they believe in chance, seeing that they maintain all is regulated by law. But a moment's reflection will show you that still it must be by chance or accident that things have fallen into some particular shape in preference to any other if there be no directing mind behind. What is law ? To speak of it as a cause is to completely misunderstand the meaning of the word. The Atheist talks of laws of nature as though they were entities that could act upon and govern matter, whereas they are simply the modes in which the phenomena occur, having nothing whatever to do with the cause that lies behind. An able modern writer has put this admirably : " There is a class of philosophers who think that when they say a thing takes place 'according to law' they have

* Essay on Probability.

explained the whole matter. Now, 'according to law' means only the definite and unvarying order in which phenomena occur. The laws of nature are not the powers of nature. Nothing is accomplished by them; they merely indicate the regulated way in which nature works. Law tells us nothing of either cause—except as immediate antecedent—or direction, or purpose." After all, therefore, if no directing mind exists, by whose volition all things are governed, it is by chance, and chance alone—however much you may attempt to explain away the ugly meaning of the word—that things are as they are, that suns have been formed and worlds peopled with living creatures, the perfection of whose organization far exceeds our most finished mechanical productions. The Atheistic theory reminds one of the parody on Lucretius, by James and Horace Smith, in reference to Drury Lane Theatre:

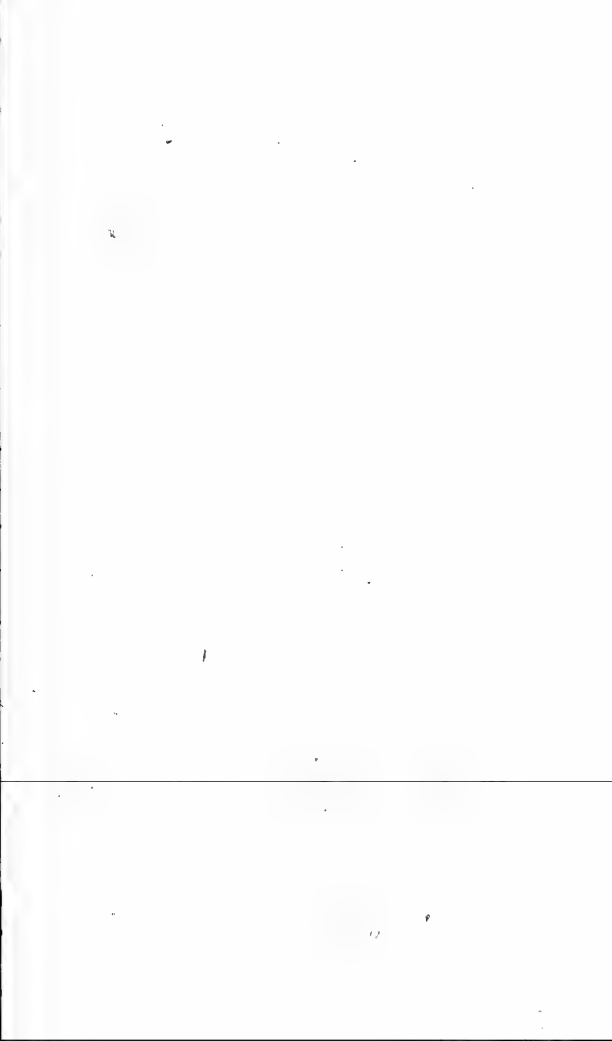
"I sing how casual bricks in airy climb
Encountered casual horsehair, casual lime;
How rafters, borne through wandering clouds elate,
Kiss'd in their slope blue elemental slates;
Clasp'd solid beams in chance directed fury,
And gave to birth our renovated Drury."^{*}

Now, it is not a whit more absurd to suppose that the building in which we are now assembled arose by some special attraction in the materials of which it is composed than to imagine that worlds could have been formed and peopled with inhabitants without a designing mind.

"Has matter more than motion? Has it thought,
Judgment, and genius? Is it deeply learned
In mathematics? Has it made such Laws,
Which but to guess, a Newton made immortal?
If so, how each sage atom laughs at me
Who thinks a clod inferior to a man!
If art to form; and counsel to conduct;
And that with greater far than human skill,
Resides not in each block; a Godhead reigns.
Grant then, Invisible, Eternal, Mind;
That granted, All is solv'd."[†]

^{*} Rejected Addresses. *Vide* Appendix D.

[†] Dr. Edward Young.



VIII. HUMAN INSTINCTS POINT TO GOD AND CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITHOUT HIM.

It is one of the favorite postulates of Atheism that we can form no idea of God. This, however, is very far from being correct, and shows that Atheists use the word idea as loosely as they do many other words. By an idea they mean that which depicts in the mind some external thing cognised by the senses. But this is far too limited a view to take. Locke says: "Whatever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding, that I call an idea." And Cousin beautifully remarks: "We do not perceive God, but we conceive Him, upon the faith of this admirable world exposed to view, and upon the other world more admirable still which we bear in ourselves." We have ideas far higher than those springing from the evidence of sense. Indeed, the lowest of all modes of viewing the universe is that which can discover no reality higher than that which the senses make known. The man who cannot rise above sense-knowledge into more lofty spheres of thought may be truly described as *ἀνθρώπος ψυχικός*, a natural man, and living far below his high capabilities. As Wordsworth says:

" Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes
He is a slave, the meanest we can meet."

And it will be remembered that when this same poet would describe a man in whose breast no generous feelings glowed, and no lofty aspirations impelled to noble thoughts, he said of him—

" A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

When we speak of the universe itself, the very term that we employ means much more than the senses can make known to us. For what does the word mean? The Atheist says that by it he intends to convey an idea of the entire system of physical nature. Even that is an idea which transcends sense-knowledge,

since he has never cognised the entire system of physical nature, and never can. But the word implies more than this. It indicates that in this system there is a oneness or unity, that all its parts are bent to some grand end, and that they form portions of a wondrous whole.

Psychological analysis clearly proves that in the phenomena of consciousness there are elements or principles which in their normal or legitimate development transcend the limits of that very consciousness, and reach to a kind of knowledge of Absolute being. No one can analyse his thoughts without seeing at once that he is in possession of ideas, notions, beliefs, etc., which have never been derived from sensation, and which cannot be extracted from sensuous experience. These ideas are space, duration, cause, substance, unity, infinity. And there is a very striking peculiarity about these having a most important bearing on this question—which is, they are distinguished from all the phenomena of sensation, inasmuch as the former are necessary, universal, and absolute, while all the latter are contingent, limited and relative. Take, by way of illustration, the idea of any kind of object, say a house on the one hand, and space on the other. The former of these is derived from experience, and is consequently contingent; the latter we know from reason alone, and is necessary. You can easily conceive of the house being destroyed—being absent from the place it occupies, and from every other place. And the rule that applies to the house will hold good of all material things. Each one, individually, you can with the greatest ease imagine not to exist. Thus the ideas that we have of material things are relative or contingent. But you cannot by any effort of the mind suppose space to be destroyed. It is not in the power of thought to conceive the non-existence of space. The idea of space is consequently a necessary idea. Take, again, the ideas that attach themselves to event and cause. The idea of an event is a contingent idea—it is something which might or might not happen. Neither supposition is contradictory or impossible. The idea of cause, on the other hand, is necessary. An event being given, the necessity for a cause to produce it follows as a matter of

course. An uncaused event is a contradiction in terms. And this law must apply to all times and to all worlds where thinking beings exist. Thus it will be seen we have principles and ideas not a few, which transcend sense-knowledge, and are necessary and universal.

Now, amongst all peoples and in all ages there is found some sort of belief in God, and hence the existence of some kind of a religion. If the argument *e consensu gentium* does not prove the existence of God, it certainly does prove that in all ages some sort of evidence has led men to believe in one. "Religion," says Professor Max Muller, the greatest living authority on the question, "is not a new invention. It is, if not as old as the world, at least as old as the world we know. As soon as we know anything of the thoughts and feelings of man, we find him in possession of religion, or rather possessed by religion. The oldest literary documents are almost everywhere religious. 'Our earth,' as Herder says, 'owes the seeds of all higher culture to religious tradition, whether literary or oral. Even if we go beyond the age of literature, if we explore the deepest levels of human thought, we can discover in the crude ore, which was made to supply the coins or counters of the human mind, the presence of religious ingredients.'"* Now, this fact has to be accounted for, and no Atheistic system with which I am acquainted has any sort of explanation that it can furnish worth a row of pins.

Religion is a necessity of man's nature, and hence its universality. What we may call following the German, "God-consciousness" exists in all probability more or less in every human breast. Sometimes this faculty has become dimmed by ignorance, superstition, and sin, and occasionally it has been left to rust through disuse, until it has all but disappeared; yet it is never entirely lost. We find some manifestation of it amongst all peoples and in every age. The fact of the universality of the belief in God was noticed by the ancients. Plutarch†

* Contemp. Rev., May, 1872, p. 211.

† Plut. Adv. Colot. Epicureum, 1124.

asserts positively that there were no races without such a belief, and Artemidorus gives expression to the same idea, the words of the latter being very explicit, *Οὐδὲν ἔθνος ἀθεοπρόν-θεον*.* In modern times some few persons have called in question the truth of this assertion, but the facts they have relied upon in support of their views have very little weight. It is contended that a few savage tribes in Africa, the Esquimaux, and the aborigines of Australia, have no conception of God, and no sort of religion. But if this were really so, it would simply prove that the Atheist's highest ideal of man is a savage, since all civilized races have the religious faculty. Suppose the case were reversed, and we found savages with a religion, and all civilized peoples without one, how the Atheist would triumphantly point to the fact as a proof that religion was the offspring of ignorance, and always disappeared before science, knowledge and culture. Such an argument, therefore, as he can found upon the absence of the belief in God amongst savages is not worth much. But the statement that any peoples are entirely destitute of religious ideas is more than questionable. A thorough acquaintance with their language and their modes of thought would in all probability disclose some vestiges of a religion not entirely lost, and a rudimentary faith which, despite its inchoate appearance, is yet capable of very high development. Indeed, there are many indications amongst the lowest savages of a vague belief in the supernatural, even where it does not manifest itself in any external form of worship, nor involve any definite conception of a Supreme Being, or of a life after death. Among these may be named the fear of the dead, which is very common amongst savages. The aborigines of Australia are, perhaps, the lowest race to be found on the face of the earth, and they are by no means destitute of the religious idea. The Rev. William Ridley, who has lived a great deal among these people, and has carefully studied their habits and modes of thought, remarks, in a letter to Sir John Lubbock: "The Kamilaroi and Wiradhuri tribes, who formerly occupied a

* Artemid., i. 9.

large territory on the Darling and its tributaries, have a traditional faith in 'Baiaime,' or 'Baiaimai,' literally 'the maker,' from *baia*, to make or build. They say that Baiaime made everything. . . . The Rev. J. Gunther, of Mudgee, who was many years engaged in the instruction of the Wiradhuri tribes, has recorded the fact that these people ascribe to Baiaime 'three of the attributes of the God of the Bible'—supreme power, immortality, and goodness. . . . A squatter, M. de Becker, who lived many years at a remote station, where the blacks were in frequent communication with him, told me he had seen many of them die with a cheerful anticipation of being soon in a 'better country.' " * God has, in truth, so implanted the idea of Himself in man's soul that it cannot fail to be discovered there by all who look within, and no circumstances are likely ever thoroughly to erase it. "He who reflects upon himself," says Plotinus, "reflects upon his original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his own soul." Religion preceded governments, and has a deeper root in society than any social law. It led the vanguard of civilization, and founded the mightiest empires that the world has seen.

The fact that man everywhere has some sort of idea of God has been considered a complete proof of the existence of such a Being by many of the greatest men that have ever lived—such men as Anselm, Spinoza, Descartes, Leibnitz, etc. Their argument took the following form: "We have the idea of a perfect Being in our minds. But existence is a part of this idea, and a necessary part; for an imaginary being is less perfect than a real being. Therefore, we are so made as necessarily to believe in the existence of a perfect Being. Whenever we think of God we are obliged to think of Him as existing. And we can have no higher proof of any reality than that we necessarily believe in its existence so soon as the idea of it arises in our mind." Whether this argument be conclusive or not, that which springs from it most certainly is—viz., that religious worship, in some

* Nature X. p. 522.

form or other, has been engaged in in every age and in every land. If this practice be based upon an illusion, how can we know that anything is true? For what is there that is more universal? If all religions are false, then universal humanity is in error. And that being so, we can have no possible guarantee for truth upon any subject. Our most potent instincts may be delusions, and our most cherished ideas hallucinations. But even then we require to be told how this tremendous delusion called religion arose. What were the causes that gave it birth? What the circumstances that called it into being? This is what the Atheist must explain if he wishes to recommend his philosophy. But he has no explanation to give, and none is possible upon his theory. The only solution of the problem will be found in the fact that "God-consciousness" is deeply implanted in the soul; and the aspiration after the Infinite, the All-Perfect, the Absolute One, is a characteristic of universal humanity. Professor Tyndall has well said: "No Atheistical reasoning can dislodge religion from the heart of man. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness, it is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic."* This is so; and hence Atheism can never take firm hold of the mind of man. Man is a religious being, and can no more change his nature in this respect than his physical form. Atheism is foreign to human nature, and can never, under any circumstances, become general. The human soul finds its resting place only in God, and nothing else can satisfy its deepest wants.

It is the fashion now for wits to be

Without a God,

Except some Force behind the things we see,
Like heat or light or electricity :

And one is odd.

Among these Oracles, who still believes
In any God who thinks or loves or grieves.

But there's a spirit, deep in the heart's core,
Of reverence,

Which somehow will not bow down to adore
The mightiest force in Nature ; what is more,

* Preface to seventh edition of Belfast Address.

I have a sense
Of being something greater far than those
Blind makers of the world which science knows.

Worship I must, but may not worship aught
Which I can bind

And yoke to do me service, having caught
The secret of its power, with wonder fraught,
But without mind ;

And while I comprehend it, I must be
Higher than that which comprehends not me.

You do not need to worship ? May be so ;
I judge you not ;

Only, they say the dog that does not know
A master, like a savage wolf, will grow,
Hating his lot,

And is a sorry brute, until he find
A mightier will than his, and nobler mind. *

What is it that Atheism has to offer us in exchange for the holy faith of which she seeks to rob us ? Simply nothing, and worse than nothing. She points us, not to the golden Orient, bathed in beauty and robed in morning light—a symbol of universal Love and Eternal Mercy—but to a black and dismal abyss, from which issue hollow moans, cries of despair, and “the Everlasting No.” She calls upon us to look, not up to a sky clear and tender as the eye of God, “but vaguely all around into a copper firmament pregnant with earthquake and tornado.” She bids us exchange our faith in a Providence which feeds the ravens, marks the humble sparrow’s fall, and bestows upon man infinite pity and a watchful care that never sleeps, for belief in a Fate cruel as the Furies and unrelenting as Satan. In our distress and our sorrow, when we struggle with sin and pant after power to conquer and sympathy to cheer, she holds up before our tearful eyes, not the cross, a source of comfort to millions of our race, but a cruel skeleton, called Natural Law, with hollow eye-sockets, rattling teeth, and mouldy bones. Listen to what Strauss has to say of the Atheism in which the unbelief of his early years culminated in old age : “The loss of

† Rev. Walter C. Smith, D. D.

the belief in Providence belongs, indeed, to the most sensible deprivations which are connected with a renunciation of Christianity. In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant whirl and hiss of its jagged iron wheels, amid the deafening crash of its ponderous stamps and hammers, in the midst of this whole terrific commotion, man—a helpless and defenceless creature—finds himself placed, not secure for a moment that on some imprudent motion a wheel may not seize him and rend him, a hammer crush him to powder. This sense of abandonment is at first something awful.* This is Atheism as described by an Atheist. And a gloomy creed it is—enough to blast all hope and cause deep despair to settle on universal humanity. For this wretched, miserable, mockery of life, shall we exchange the sweet joy and happiness of religion, that can cheer amid direst distress, and console under heaviest afflictions? That would, indeed, be a madman's act. Spoke not David truly when he described the man who denies God as foolish? The Atheist can see nothing in the universe but huge wheels, ponderous hammers, and heavy beams of iron, governed by an irresistible destiny, which at any moment may grind him to powder, and can in no case afford him either help or sympathy. To the Christian, all external things are seen to be full of beauty and redolent of life. The carolling of the birds, the whisperings of the trees, and the balmy breezes, all tell of a wondrous Love by which earthly things were created and are upheld. Every opening bud, every blooming flower, the busy insect on the wing, and the mellowed golden beauty of the landscape under the rays of the setting sun, all point to the Everlasting Father and the better country. The blue mountains, with their crests of snow and the calm azure of heaven's arch overhead, proclaim that man is loved by God and cared for by the Infinite One. The following fable from Thomas Carlyle aptly describes the Atheist's position: "Gentlemen," said a conjuror one fine starry evening, "those heavens are a *deceptio visus*: what you call stars are nothing but fiery motes in the air. Wait a little. I will clear them off, and show you how the matter is." Where-

* The Old Faith and the New.

upon the artist produced a long syringe of great force, and, stooping over a neighboring puddle, filled it with mud and dirty water, which he then squirted with might and main against the zenith. The wiser of the company unfurled their umbrellas; but most part, looking up in triumph, cried: 'Down with delusion! It is an age of science! Have we not tallow lights then?' Here the mud and dirty water fell and bespattered and besplattered these simple persons, and even put out the eyes of several, so that they never saw the stars any more. Enlightened Utilitarian! Art thou aware that this patent logic-mill of thine, which grindeth with such a clatter, is but a mill?" This mechanical view of things can neither satisfy the demands of the intellect nor meet the wants of the heart. Man's earliest guide and first leaders looked to the heavens for support, and acquired fresh strength for their purpose by so doing. The simple breathings of infancy point to fears of that which lies beyond material things, and the stoutest-hearted man—whatever his boastings to the contrary—is in continual awe of the supernatural. The fears and hopes and desires of humanity all point to a spiritual source, whilst the deepest yearnings of the human heart tell of wants that can never be satisfied without trust in God.

There is a grand poem, translated from the Russian by the late Sir John Bowring, which, despite its length, is so good and so appropriate as to be worth reproducing here:

Oh, Thou Eternal One! whose presence bright
 All space doth occupy, all motion guide,
 Unchanged, through Time's all-devastating flight;
 Thou only God! there is no God beside!
 Being above all beings! mighty One!
 Whom none can comprehend, and none explore;
 Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone;
 Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er;
 Being whom we call God, and know no more.
 In its sublime research, Philosophy
 May measure out the ocean deep, may count
 The sands, or the sun's rays; but God! for Thee
 There is no weight nor measure; none can mount
 Upto Thy mysteries; Reason's brightest spark,

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Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try
 To trace Thy counsels infinite and dark.
 And thought is lost, ere thought can soar so high,
 Even-like past moments in eternity.
 Thou, from primeval nothingness didst call
 First chaos, then existence ; Lord, on Thee
 Eternity had its foundation ; all
 Sprung forth from Thee,—of light, joy, harmony,
 Sole origin ; all life, all beauty Thine.
 Thy word created all, and doth create ;
 Thy splendor fills all space with rays divine ;
 Thou art, and wert, and shall be ! Glorious, great,
 Light-giving, life-sustaining Potentate,
 Thy chains the unmeasured universe surround,—
 Upheld by Thee, by Thee inspired with breath !
 Thou the beginning with the end hast bound,
 And beautifully mingled life and death !
 As sparks mount upwards from the fiery blaze,
 So some are born, so worlds spring forth from Thee ;
 And as the spangles in the sunny rays
 Shine round the silver snow, the pageantry
 Of heaven's bright army glitters in Thy praise.*
 A million torches, lighted by Thy hand,
 Wander unwearied through the blue abyss :
 They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,
 All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss.
 What shall we call them ? Piles of crystal light,
 A glorious company of golden streams,
 Lamps of celestial ether burning bright,
 Suns lighting systems with their joyous beams.
 But Thou to these art as the noon to night ;—
 Yes, as a drop of water in the sea,
 All this magnificence in Thee is lost.
 What are ten thousand worlds compared to thee ?
 And what am I, then ? Heaven's unnumbered host,
 Though multiplied by myriads, and arrayed
 In all the glory of sublimest thought,
 Is but an atom in the balance weighed
 Against Thy greatness ; is a cypher brought

*The force of this simile can hardly be imagined by those who have
 never witnessed the sun shining with unclouded splendour in a cold of
 twenty or thirty degrees of Reaumur, and thousand and ten thousand spark-
 ling stars of ice brighter than the brightest diamond play on the surface of
 the frozen snow, and the slightest breeze sets myriads of icy atoms in mo-
 tion whose glancing light and beautiful rainbow hues dazzle and weary the
 eye.

Against Infinity. What am I, then ? Nought.
 Nought but the influence of Thy light divine,
 Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom too.
 Yes, in my spirit doth Thy spirit shine,
 As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.
 Nought ! But I live, and on Hope's pinions fly
 Eager towards Thy presence ; for in Thee
 I live, and breathe, and dwell, aspiring high,
 Even to the throne of Thy divinity.
 I am, O God ; and surely Thou must be !
 Thou art ; directing, guiding all Thou art ;
 Direct my understanding, then, to Thee ;
 Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart ;
 Though but an atom 'midst immensity,
 Still I am something fashioned by Thy hand ;
 I hold a middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth.
 On the last verge of mortal being stand,
 Close to the realm where angels have their birth,
 Just on the borders of the spirit land.
 The chain of being is complete in me ;
 In me is matter's last gradation lost,
 And the next step is Spirit, Deity !
 I can command the lightning, and am dust ;
 A monarch, and a slave ; a worm, a god !
 Whence came I here, and how ? so marvellously
 Constructed and conceived ? This clod
 Lives surely through some higher energy,
 For from itself alone it could not be !
 Creator,—yes, Thy wisdom and Thy word
 Created me ! Thou Source of life and good !
 Thou spirit of my spirit, and my Lord !
 Thy light, Thy love, in their bright plenitude,
 Filled me with an immortal soul to spring
 Over the abyss of death, and bade it wear
 The garment of eternal day, and wing
 Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,
 Even to its Source, to Thee, its Author, there.
 O thought ineffable ! O vision blest !
 Though worthless our conceptions all of Thee,
 Yet shall Thy shadowed image fill our breast,
 And waft its homage to Thy Deity.
 God ! thus alone my lowly thought can soar,—
 Thus seek Thy presence. Being wise and good !
 'Midst Thy vast works, admire, obey, adore ;
 And when the tongue is eloquent no more,
 The soul shall speak in tears of gratitude.

Appendices.

NOTE A.

DENIAL OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

Modern Atheists are constantly complaining of misrepresentation on the part of those who ascribe to them a denial of the existence of God. Their position, they tell us, is that of having no belief or disbelief on the subject. A leader amongst them in England, on one occasion, bawled out at a public meeting: "The gentleman lies when he says that I ever said there was no God." Yet the same man has, in hundreds of instances, declared himself an Atheist, which to ordinary minds conveys the idea of denial of the existence of God. But, it will be said, that is a Christian definition of the word, not an Atheistic one. Well, let us see. The editor of the *National Reformer*—Mr. Bradlaugh—in reply to a correspondent signing himself "W. W., Liverpool," wrote as follows:

"An Atheist denies the existence of God."—*National Reformer*, August 18, 1872.

If, therefore, the speaker referred to be an Atheist—which he says he is—then, according to the definition given—which is his own—he does deny the existence of God. But it is difficult to see why any quibble should be raised over this matter. If such men do not deny the existence of God, then they are Agnostics rather than Atheists. But some of them speak out emphatically enough on the subject.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake says of Richard Carlile that he reached the climax of his Atheism on the title page of the tenth volume of the *Republican* when he declared: "There is no such God in existence as any man has preached, nor any kind of God." ("Life of Carlile," page 24). The late Robert Cooper wrote:

"I reject the theory of God because it is not a fact" ("Popular Development of Atheism," p. 7). This is a curiously-worded phrase, and shows what a fog the man's mind was in. It literally means that he rejected the theory because the said theory was not a fact, as though some theories were facts. What he intends to say is, I suppose, that the existence of God is not a fact, which is assuredly a denial of that existence.

One of the ablest writers in the *Secular Review*—a paper edited at the time by Mr. Charles Watts—who has recently been in this country—concludes an article on the existence of God as follows:

"Meanwhile, let the gauntlet lie where I have thrown it awaiting the acceptance of Christian, Deist, or Agnostic. If any can prove that I am wrong by appeal to such absolute facts as those from which I draw my arguments, the admission of defeat shall not be wanting. If not, let silence confess that I am right and they wrong. Lastly, be it known, that only logical argument will be seriously dealt with. Sentimentalism or attempts to get behind ultimate facts, will be ridiculed, not answered, for to such answer is impossible. Facts, and deductions from facts, can alone be taken as answers to the statements which I have here maintained. *There is no God.*"—*Secular Review*, January 20, 1883, p. 37.

The italics are his own. Here is a denial—surely emphatic enough. And Mr. Joseph Symes, at that time a sort of Lieutenant of Mr. Charley Bradlaugh, and a prominent lecturer on Secularistic platforms, writes:

"Bah! There is no God! The Christians seem to have set up theirs to blaspheme Him."—*Freethinker*, Oct. 1, 1882, p. 310.

The following is also to the purpose, and it illustrates at the same time Secular profundity of thought:

"An Atheist's answer to 'What was the origin of the Universe?'"

"God only knows—and there is no God."—*Secular Review*, February 3, 1883, p. 73.

According to Secularism, therefore, the non-existent has knowledge; in other words, the non-existent exists. Truly, Freethinkers are a very credulous set of people.

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IS INERTIA A PROPERTY OF MATTER ?

Occasionally some of the Atheistic lecturers, when driven into a corner, will flatly deny that inertia is a property of matter. One of them with whom I once debated in the North of England, did this before a large audience. Another has done it in print in a tract entitled "Has Man a Soul ?" When men are so egregiously ignorant of the first rudiments of scientific knowledge, as this fact proves such persons to be, they are hardly worth replying to. Yet as there are large numbers of working men who listen to their harangues, and who, not being educated themselves, become misled by them, it may be as well to give the following method adapted by Professor Challis (Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy in the University of Cambridge) for demonstrating inertia. He remarks : " That the quality of inertia is recognizable by the senses may be shown by such an experiment as the following : Conceive to be placed on a perfectly smooth horizontal plane a perfectly smooth sphere, and suppose the sphere to be pushed with the hand so as to be made to move in a straight course on the plane (without rolling) with a certain uniformly accelerated motion during a certain interval of time. This might practically be done, with sufficient accuracy for the purposes of experiment by regulating the motion communicated to the sphere by the hand, so that it shall be parallel and equal to the motion of another sphere (which might be called a pilot sphere), the latter having been caused to move by *mechanical* arrangement in the above specified manner. Let the same thing be done with spheres of the same material, of twice, three times the size of the first, and in each case let the motion be regulated by the same motion of the pilot sphere. Then it would certainly be felt that the motion of the sphere was in each instance produced by a *personal effort*, and it would be perceived that the effort was greater, the greater the size of the sphere, the effect of friction being assumed to be inconsiderable. The experiment might even suggest that the effort was in exact proportion to,

the size of the sphere; but it is not adopted to prove this law the evidence of which, as will be stated subsequently, rests on different grounds. It proves, however, that the motion of the sphere was accelerated by a *personal effort* consciously exercised. Now, the *inertia* may be defined to be the quality which, under the given circumstances, necessitated the effort employed to accelerate its motion. Hence we may draw the noteworthy conclusion that *the reality of inertia as a quality pertaining to bodies is recognisable by a sense of personal effort.*" ("Tran. Vict. Inst.," vol. xi., p. 202)

NOTE C.

WILL THE ONLY SOURCE OF FORCE.

The Rev. J. P. Kirkman, F. R. S., in his admirable work entitled "Philosophy Without Assumptions," has laid down the following propositions:

A. The only force which is directly given, and immediately known to me, is my own will force, and all my knowledge of other forces acting in the cosmos is mediate and found by logical inference.

B. My will-force is my only force-finder—that is, the only power that can find with demonstration—so that I can show you how to find.

C. In every train of reasoned thought about any force or forces found in action in the cosmos, the fundamental proposition out of which all my other propositions flow, and on the certainty of which their truth to me depends, is this: In finding force *I will in act, and I know that I will*, so that if all the steps of the reasoning be written down without omission in their order, this proposition must stand written at the head of all. *In first finding force in this inquiry, I willed in act, and knew that I willed.*

NOTE D.

ATOMS AND CHANCE

I sing of Atoms, whose creative brain
With eddying impulse built new Drury Lane;
Not to the labours of subservient man,
To no young Wyatt appertains the plan;

We mortals stalk, like horses in a mill,
 Impassive media of Atomic will.
 Ye stare ! then truth's broad talisman discern,
 'Tis Demonstration speaks—attend and learn.

From floating elements in chaos hurled,
 Self-formed of Atoms sprang the infant world.
 No great FIRST CAUSE inspired the happy plot ;
 But all was matter, and no matter what.
 Atoms, attracted by some law occult,
 Settling in spheres, the globe was the result.
 Pure child of Chance, which still directs the ball,
 As rotatory atoms rise or fall.
 In æther launched, the peopled bubble floats
 A mass of particles and confluent motes,
 So nicely poised that, if one atom flings
 Its weight away, aloft the planet springs,
 And wings its course thro' realms of boundless space,
 Outstripping comets in eccentric race.
 Add but one atom more, it sinks outright
 Down to the realms of Tartarus and night.
 What waters melt or scorching fires consume
 In different forms their being re-assume ;
 Hence can no change arise, except in name,
 For weight and substance ever are the same.

Thus with the flames that from old Drury rise
 Its elements primeval sought the skies ;
 There pendulous to wait the happy hour
 When new attractions should restore their power ;
 So in this procreant theatre elate
 Echoes unborn their future life await :
 Here embryo sounds in æther lie congealed,
 Like words in northern atmosphere congealed ;
 Here many a foetus-laugh and half-encore
 Clings to the roof or creeps along the floor.
 By puffs concipient some in æther flit,
 And soar in bravos from the thundering pit ;
 Some forth on ticket nights from tradesman break
 To mar the actor they design to make ;
 While some this mortal life abortive miss,
 Crushed by a groan or strangled by a hiss.
 So when "dog's meat" re-echoes through the streets,
 Rush sympathetic dogs from their retreats,
 Beam with bright blaze their supplicating eyes,
 Sink their hind legs, ascend their joyful cries ;

Each wild with hope, and maddening to prevail,
Points the pleased ear and wags th' expectant tail.

Ye fallen bricks, in Drury's fire calcined,
Since doomed to slumber crouched upon the wind,
Sweet was the hour when, tempted by your freaks,
Congenial trowels smoothed your yellow cheeks,
Float dulcet serenades upon the ear,
Bends every atom from its ruddy sphere,
Twinkles each eye, and, peeping from its veil,
Marks in adverse crowd its destined male.
The oblong beauties clap their hands of grit,
And brick-dust tilterings on the breezes flit ;
Then down they rush in amatory race,
Their dusty bridegrooms eager to embrace.
Some choose old lovers, some decidè for new ;
But each, when fixed, is to her station true.
Thus various bricks are made as taste invite,
The red, the grey, the dingy, or the white.

Perhaps some half-baked rover frank and free
To alien beauty bends the lawless knee ;
But, of unhallowed fascinations sick,
Soon quits his Cyprian for his married brick.
The Dido atom calls and scolds in vain,
No crisp Æneas soothes the widow's pain.

So in Cheapside, what time Aurora peeps,
A mingled noise of dustman, milk, and sweeps
Falls on the housemaid's ear. Amazed, she stands,
Then opes the door with cinder sabled-hands,
And " matches " calls. The dustman bubbled flat,
Thinks 'tis for him, and doffs his fantailed hat ;
The milkman, whom her second cries assail,
With sudden sink unyokes the clinking pail.
Now louder grown, by turns she screams and weeps.
Alas ! her screaming only brings the sweeps.
Sweeps but put out, she wants to raise, a flame,
All calls for matches, but 'tis still the same.
Atoms and housemaids, mark the moral true—
If once you go astray, no MATCH for you.

As atoms in one mass united mix,
So bricks attraction feel for kindred bricks ;
Some in the cellar vein, perchance, on high,
Fair chimney chums on beds of mortar lie :

Enamoured of the sympathetic clod,
 Leaps the red bridegroom to the labourer's hod,
 And up the ladder bears the workman taught
 To think he bears the bricks—mistaken thought !
 A proof behold—If near the top they find
 The nymphs or broken-cornered or unkind,
 Back to the bottom, leaping with a bound,
 They bear their bleeding carriers to the ground.
 So legends tell, along the lofty hill
 Paced the twin heroes, gallant Jack and Jill ;
 On trudged the Gemini to reach the rail
 That shields the well's top from the expectant pail,
 When Jack falls ; and rolling in the rear,
 Jill follows the attraction of his kindred sphere ;
 Head over heels begins his toppling track,
 Throws sympathetic somersets with Jack,
 And at the mountain's base bobs plump against him, whack !

Ye living atoms, who unconscious sit,
 Jumbled by chance in gallery, box and pit,
 For you no Peter opes the fabled door,
 No churlish Charon plies the shadowy oar.
 Breathe but a space, and Boreas' casual sweep
 Shall beat your scattered corpses o'er the deep
 To gorge the greedy elements and mix
 With water, marl and clay, and stones and sticks ;
 While charged with fancied souls, sticks, stones, and clay
 Shall take your seats, and hiss or clap the play.

Oh happy age ! when convert Christians read
 No sacred writings but the Pagan creed ;
 O happy age ! when, spurning Newton's dreams,
 Our poet's sons recite Lucretian themes,
 Abjure the idle systems of their youth,
 And turn again to atoms and to truth.
 O happier still when England's dauntless dames,
 Aw'd by no chaste alarms, no latent shames,
 The bard's fourth book unblushingly peruse,
 And learn the rampant lesson of the stews !

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